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ENGLISH FURNITURE

OF THE CABRIOLE PERIOD

H. AVRAY TIPPING

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English furniture of the cabriole period

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English Furniture of the Cabriole Period

English Furniture
of the Cabriole Period
by H. Avray Tipping

Jonathan Cape
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Chapter I — *The Cabriole*

ALTHOUGH the furniture of our Elizabethan and Jacobean periods is very picturesque and sympathetic, it lacks the learnedness of design and expertness of craftsmanship which had already been attained in Italy and France. After the Restoration of 1660 England saw a rapid development of these qualities, and what in the domains of architecture and decoration was being effected by Wren and Gibbons, was also reached, in their sphere, by our furniture makers. If they did not quite emulate the palatial manner, the ambitious gorgeousness, of some of their leading Continental compeers, certainly, by the beginning of the eighteenth century, they had, as producers of fine domestic gear, reached a very high standard of excellence. The reigns of Anne and of the first two Georges are thereby rendered of particular interest in our furniture annals, and this treatise is a short survey of the leading types that then prevailed, the theme being illustrated from the collection of Mr. Percival Griffiths, who has gradually brought together a mass of representative pieces dating from this half-century.

The period is marked by a salient feature, and may be described as the age of the cabriole. The straight leg held its own under William III, and became the vogue again under George III ; but during the intervening reigns it fell out of fashion. It merely appears as a survival under Anne, and an occasional revival under George II, thus emphasising the prevalence of the cabriole. The normal Restoration leg had been a straight twist strengthened by turned or twisted stretchers, an arrangement which we find in the majority of early Charles II tables and cabinet stands, as well as in chairs and settees. Until then oak was the prevailing material of English furniture, although already in the sixteenth century walnut was the customary wood in Italy and France. In England it was then a scarce tree little known to commerce, and although the word quite often occurs in Elizabethan inventories it probably refers as much to foreign-made furniture imported by travelled Englishmen as to home-made pieces. For instance, Sir Thomas Smith was in Paris as ambassador in the early days of the reign. A few years after his return an inventory was made of the contents of his country house of Ankerwick, near Eton. Therein we read that the parlour had "a great foulding table of Walnut Tre," and there are also a little court table of walnut and a cupboard of walnut and pear. No doubt they were pieces

typical of the style of François Ier or his son and grandsons, but such importations turned our attention to their material, and the planting of walnut trees became habitual. Thus there had grown up in this country an adequate supply of the wood fit for felling when Charles II landed at Dover in 1660, bringing with him the Continental fashions, which favoured the use of the lighter and more easily carved wood. Walnut then held the field until it was superseded by mahogany at about the middle of the cabriole period, so that the early pieces are almost exclusively of walnut, and the later of mahogany.

The straight leg of the Restoration shared popularity with the scroll, especially of the double C form, which was much favoured in the latter part of Charles II's reign. But with William III came a new form of straight leg, originating in France, but probably reaching us through Holland, where it will have been introduced by Daniel Marot. It was baluster shaped, sometimes turned, but more often square or octagonal, starting from a cap and diminishing as it descended to meet the stretchers that were inserted between the base of the leg and the bulbous foot, and formed a flat serpentine or set of C scrolls with a turned or carved vase at the central meeting point. The English examples soon took on a distinct native character, but the type arose

in France early in Louis XIV's reign and was much used, until the seventeenth century closed, by André Charles Boule and the other leading Court cabinet-makers. Meanwhile the cabriole was being evolved. Unlike the scroll which it was to supersede, a living form was its immediate derivative. A French dancing term meaning a goat-leap, it is noticeable that a goat's foot was at first generally used to terminate the furniture leg which took the name and assumed a form that is a decorative adaptation of a quadruped's front leg from the knee downwards. Such a form consorts badly with a stretcher, which breaks the clean inner curve and projects awkwardly and unpleasantly from the fetlock. Fortunately, at the moment when design called for its abandonment, improved construction and workmanship rendered it unnecessary, so that, whereas it was usual at the beginning of Queen Anne's reign, at its end it was rare.

TO show the difference between the outgoing straight-legged and stretchered form and the incoming fashion of curved and stretcherless leg, two writing-desks, of much the same form and date, are illustrated. That with straight legs [PLATE I] is somewhat of a survival. The legs and stretcher are of William III type, but as the desk flap informs us that it was made from a tree which fell during the historic storm of 1703, and as it was then the habit to use wood well and naturally seasoned, it cannot date much before 1710, which brings us to a time not too early for the second desk to have been produced. The two are similar in measurement, in the arrangement of the flap and the fittings of the upper part, in the choice of finely figured walnut for the veneer, and in the character of the banding. But, besides the legs, there is another point of difference. The one is a movable desk set on a stand, the other [PLATE II] is all of one piece. A box with a sloping lid to write at when placed on a table was one of the very limited forms of early furniture, the chest, the table and the bench being the most important. From

them had come many derivatives by the time the cabriole period began, and the multiplication of small household effects led to the development and general use of the drawer and the cupboard. The inconvenience of the chest, of which the top must be cleared to reach the contents, became strongly felt when that top was more frequently set with utilities or ornaments. Modifications were introduced. Its top was fixed and the front hinged. It was raised on short legs as a credence or hutch. The idea of the Court Cupboard is of chests superimposed. Into all such variations one or more drawers came to be fitted, and as their convenience was widely appreciated, not only did they occupy the entire body of chests very variant in form, but they were customary adjuncts of many other forms of furniture. Thus, with the cabriole there co-existed a multiplication of the drawer threatening the existence of the leg in every piece of furniture which was not intended to sit on or to sit at. And even in the latter, where a flap falling or pulling forward gave knee room in front of the main facia of the piece, the drawers descended to the ground. Thus in the first two desks illustrated there are two drawers only below the flap, and therefore the pieces terminate with legs. But in the third [PLATE III], which is quite a quarter of a century later in date, the four drawers preclude the possibility of legs,

and we get the chest of drawers with writing accommodation above, known as the "scrutoire" or bureau. Yet if the leg is gone the cabriole spirit is no less assertive. It controls the frame which swells forward on both front and sides. It also dictates the form of the footing, such as was adopted during the period even when the sides of a drawered piece were straight, as in the last piece illustrated.

Although furniture by the middle of the eighteenth century had assumed many forms, it was not in the abundance—shall we say the plethora?—which characterises our own day, when quantity is so much more popular than quality. There was, therefore, a desire to make each piece as compactly comprehensive as possible. Hence what Chippendale in *The Director* calls a "Buroe-Dressing Table" such as is shown in PLATE IV. It is an exquisitely finished and contrived piece. The central cupboard pushes back to give added knee room. The top drawer, when pulled out, has a baize-covered top for writing, and the little drawer at the side holds ink bottles. But a shallow scoop at each end of this top gives hold for the fingers to push it back and disclose an elaborate array of boxes and divisions to hold all the toilet requisites demanded by the most exigent Georgian belle. If she wishes herself to embellish her face, she raises the central apparatus as a looking-glass. But when she submits her head to the

prolonged processes of the hairdresser she reverses the apparatus and raises it again as a reading-frame.

Although the spelling of early eighteenth-century society folk—especially those of the fair sex—was still apt to be free of the trammels of the grammarian and the lexicographer, the letter-writing habit had, as these pieces prove, reached the pitch of needing chests of drawers and even dressing-tables fitted with writing facilities. Additional room for stowing letters, documents, account and other books could be given by placing a shallow cupboard on such part of the top as was not occupied by the flap, and the name of writing-cabinet was assigned to the composite piece. Both bureau and writing-cabinet occur before the seventeenth century closes, but they were not numerous until after walnut had been displaced by mahogany, which is the substance of the cabinet now illustrated [PLATE V]. It is difficult to assign it an exact date. It is certainly of one design carried out at one time, but the lower half is rather older in feeling than the upper half. The latter has the full architectural character which did not prevail until George II's reign, and which we connect with William Kent's vogue as a designer. But the bureau is still on the model of those made of walnut under Queen Anne. Indeed I have one in mind at Belton, of which the interior scheme is

almost identical, although it probably saw the last days of William III's reign. Note the serpentine sweep of the pigeon-holes with drawers below them, the central cupboard inspired by the earlier Italian temple-fronted cabinets, the steps of geometric inlay which pull out as a drawer, the looking-glassed door which opens on to a vistaed space with inlaid floor, the door, flanked by sections of a classic order, forming a block which pulls out on touching a spring and revealing nests of secret drawers. All this is also characteristic of the Belton piece, and the looking-glassed doors of the upper half savour of the same earlier manner. But its other details and general lines render it very improbable that it was made till after 1730. Despite the excellence of design and workmanship which make it worthy of having come from Thomas Chippendale's workshop, it is possible that these mixed qualities arise from its being of provincial origin ; say Bristol, or some other West Country centre, for it was found fifteen or more years ago by its present possessor in a private parlour of a Monmouth hotel-keeper. Its excellent repair and untouched condition give it enhanced charm and interest.

The quiet little English "scrutoire" in its forward swell and also in its key and handle-plates modestly borrows from the elaborately serpentined and richly mounted French commodes of the Louis XV period,

of which Chippendale gives many an Englished version in his *Director*, telling us that—

> The ornamental Parts are intended for Brass-Work, which I would advise should be modelled in Wax, and then cast from these models.

In England such mounting never, in extent or in quality, reached the point that it did in France. But chased ormolu cornerings, footings, headings and bandings, of good quality, were made and used for sumptuous pieces, while for fine household furniture the flat plate for scutcheon and handle, such as we find on the writing-cabinet drawers, gave way, by the middle of the century, to a richer type made in the manner which Chippendale mentions. Such appears on the double chest of drawers [PLATE VI] of which the Chinese fret of the cornice and chamfered edges are associated with pagoda topped and fretted plates, while the shell and C-scrolled handles end with the heads of much the same birds as were used on the "Chinese" mirror frame and plaster work of the latter half of George II's reign. The evolution of the double chest of drawers is rather like that of the desk. Under William III we get chests of drawers raised on stands having only one tier of drawers above the legs. Then the stand became a second complete chest of drawers. But although such occur in walnut dating from the days of Anne, the "tall

boy" did not become customary to the chamber till mahogany prevailed, which it had done long before the piece illustrated was made, about 1750.

Although straight-sided, the footing has, in compressed form, both the lines and detail common to the cabriole leg, while in chairs and settees the spirit of the cabriole not only dominates the leg, but influences the arms and back.

CHAIRS, stools and settees were the principal kinds of seat furniture that prevailed during this period. The bench was going out, the sofa coming in. Meanwhile, the chair was multiplying and being adopted for universal use. At Hampton Court in 1699 it was not merely the State and principal bedchambers that were supplied with chairs, but even the "Foot Guard rooms" had them of the cane type, while in the Horse Guards officers' rooms there were "two dozen of Turkey work chairs."

This was a great departure from the original purpose and etymology of the chair. It had been of rarity and importance—a seat of honour or of office. Of its old meaning we have survivals in such expressions as the Speaker's chair and the professorial chair, while in its Greek form it is now applied not to the seat of a bishop, but to the church that contains it. In French, however, its retains its early sense. Littré defines *chaire* as a raised seat from which one speaks, teaches or commands.[1] But he

[1] [*Dictionnaire de la Langue Française*, E. Littré, I, 539.]

tells how, in the sixteenth century, the people of Paris pronounced an R as if it were a Z, and out of this "vicious pronunciation" arose the word *chaise* adopted to describe the single seat with back which was becoming more frequent and less heavy. The lightest form could be moved easily and was the delight of the talkative ladies, or *caqueteuses*, who could draw them together for a gossip, so that a sixteenth-century writer, expatiating on the power of speech of Parisian women, tells how their seats are called *caquetoires*. Walnut was then in full use in France, but in England oak and insularity combined to postpone the prevalence of the light chair until the Restoration, when the walnut frame and the cane seat greatly reduced the weight, although the height of the back, the elaboration of the stretcher and the wealth of carving were against mobility. With the stretcherless cabriole leg, the lowered back and the restraint of ornament which characterised the normal chair of Queen Anne's reign, additional handiness was gained, and the ordered line of chairs along the walls of a reception-room could be changed without effort for conversational and other social grouping. "Set chairs and the *Bohea* Tea and leave us," says Penelope to her maid in the "Lying Lovers," written by Steele in 1704.[1] With the cabriole leg comes

[1] [Steele's *Dramatic Works*, II, 36 (1747 ed.).]

the curve in the back. The designer must have rejoiced at a combination which carries a graceful waved line from foot to cresting. Did he invent it out of zeal for beauty, or was it imposed upon him by a comfort-loving society that was growing fond of a stuffed back, and required that even a wood back should be so shaped as to afford the utmost support to the human frame by assimilating to its contours? Mons. Havart assigns the change in France to the closing period of the seventeenth century, and considers that the cabriole leg as well as the curved back were a "condescension" to the convenience of the sitter.[1] Certainly the baluster leg does not consort with the curved back anything like so well as the cabriole, and the demand for the former may be largely responsible for the vogue of the latter, and also for the flowing line that it reached at its zenith, especially in England, where it attained

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[1] "Avec le dernier tiers du XVII[e] siècle les formes s'assouplissent brusquement, et les meubles, par une condescendance jusqu' alors ignorée, se plient aux convenances de ceux qui les emploient . . . les pieds de biche qui succèdent aux pieds de balustres, se dérobant par une courbe gracieuse, laissant les talons se mouvoir sans risquer de se heurter à des angles aigus."—Havart, *La Menuiserie*, 144, 5.

its greatest popularity. Where and when it arose is not known precisely. I am aware of no grounds beyond conjecture for the theory that it came from China through the Dutch, and that the European form arose in Holland and thence came to England. It must be borne in mind that in early Egyptian and Classic times seats were "supported upon representations of the legs of beasts of the chase."[1] France under Louis XIV was supreme in arts and crafts, and most departures originated in her workshops. Thus the *pied de biche*, the earliest form of the cabriole leg, arose there, according to Mons. Havart in the last third of the seventeenth century. It may therefore have been known to Daniel Marot before the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes drove him, in 1685, from France to Holland. He became architect to William of Orange, who, on gaining the English throne in 1689, brought him over and entrusted him with much of the decoration and furnishing of Hampton Court Palace. There we find a set of *pied de biche* chairs, and as the seats are covered in *petit point*, such as we know that Queen Mary and her ladies industriously worked, the set may have been made for her temporary quarters, fitted up in the Tudor "water gallery," and occupied by her from 1690 to her death four years later. Here

[1] [*Encyc. Brit.*, 11th edition, V, 801.]

were set out her collections of Oriental and Delft ware in the manner shown in various of Marot's designs for room decorations. But neither in these nor in any other designs by him, either of completely furnished rooms or of individual pieces of furniture, do I find any representation of a cabriole leg. Chairs and tables alike still show the supremacy of the baluster leg, with an occasional change to C scrolls. Clearly he was no ardent advocate of the cabriole form, and may have ignored it. Yet the attribution of the Hampton Court set to the last years of Queen Mary may well be correct. So numerous are the recognisable steps in the change from the late Charles II C-scrolled, heavily stretchered and elaborately carved-backed chairs to the full cabriole, stretcherless and simple-backed type of Anne that they must spread over a considerable number of years. At first the leg starts out straight from the bottom of the seat frame, and only after an inch or two swells out into a curved knee. Such chairs are likely to be a few years earlier than those where the interval is eliminated as in the Hampton Court set. There, however, we still find the front stretcher upright and carved in the Charles II manner, in conjunction with side stretchers of the flat serpentine type. Before long the front stretcher is also of that type, as in the specimen belonging to Mr. Percival Griffiths [PLATE VII, 1]. Its back is identical in

design with the Hampton Court set, and the legs are similar except for the cabochon panel on each side of the knee. The design probably remained in use for a few years, the front stretcher alone being modified, so that 1695 is very probably the date of its production. It will have taken all the years of Queen Anne's reign to effect the changes shown in the next example illustrated [PLATE VII, 2]. Stretchers have become unnecessary owing to new and improved construction. The lowering of the back has lessened the strain. The seat frame has become a fairly deep visible rail, rebated to take the loose seat, and into the under side of the frame the knees of the leg, widening out in console manner, are firmly fixed and meet the front apron or drop in a manner that gives the utmost rigidity. Design as well as construction has gone forward. There is a perfect balance and correlation of parts and of ornament. The hind legs are now consonant with the front without being fully cabrioled. The seat rail completes the curve of the leg, both in its general form and the ample cavetto of its moulding. The same lines reappear in the back. The uprights, which already in the Hampton Court chairs broke from the straight into a curve at one-third of their height, now break lower down and curve over at the top as a C scroll. Into this fits the much modified cresting, which itself is a continuation of the broad

central splat that in its outline follows the curves of the uprights. There is no longer a cross-rail near the base of the back, but the splat rises from a plinth set on to the seat rail. The ornament is excellent in quality but restrained in quantity. Much of the effect is gained by veneering all fairly broad surfaces with the choicest figured walnut. Only the legs are wholly without such veneer, for it is on the flat front of the uprights, as well as on the splat, cresting, seat rail and drop. On to it a certain amount of carved ornament, often worked out of a sheet of walnut not more than a quarter-inch thick, is glued so securely and delicately that not only has it withstood two centuries of wear, but the junction is so invisible that it needs a magnifying-glass to reveal the fact that the veneer and the carving are not out of the same piece. In the chair we are studying—a choice yet representative example of the fully evolved Queen Anne type—the carving on the knees of the front leg is nearly as shallow as that applied to the cresting and drop. But as the knee carving is always out of the solid block of wood from which the leg is shaped it is often in much greater relief, and occurs even when the rest of the piece is devoid of carving, as in the small chair-backed settee [PLATE VIII]. These backs have the same lines as the chair, both as to upright, splat and cresting, but the outline is simplified and the ornament lacking. Reliance is placed upon the

quality of the figured walnut veneer to give the desired richness of effect, and there is no carving except for the shell on the knees and the eagle head terminating the outward curves of the arms. The club feet show the most usual and widely adopted modification of the *pied de biche*, whereas the chair has the more elaborate ball and claw, inspired, as is generally thought, by the pearl-grasping dragon so much represented on the then fashionable examples of Chinese ceramics, lacquer and bronze. As this ball and claw appears in chairs that still retain the stretcher, and also in examples dating late in George II's reign, its vogue extended throughout the cabriole period, whereas the lion's paw and mask are motifs that had a rather shorter period of popularity, occurring very sparsely before the accession of George II, soon after which the large settee illustrated [PLATE IX] will have been produced. The treble back, admitting of a 6 ft. length, is unusual, especially in walnut. The small settee is only 4 ft. long, and by widening the double back a length of 4 ft. 6 in. was easily obtainable, which was as long as it was customary to make this form of seat, distinctive of the cabriole period. Settees with stuffed backs, divided up into two and three chair backs, made about 1695, and having baluster legs, were till recently at Hornby Castle, and were not unusual at the time. But the open wooden-backed form comes in only

with the cabriole leg, the earliest approach to it being a double elbowless chair dated 1690, but of full Charles II carved, crested and cane-panelled type, at S. Martin's, Ludgate Hill.

Another peculiarity of Mr. Percival Griffiths's large settee is the mode of bringing the whole knee and its side scrolls up on to the rail, which on this account is unusually deep and finishes with a nulling, reversed on each side of a central flower. It was quite normal for the knee to rise in a sort of central cresting on to the rail, as in the small example, but in the larger the side scrolls are the same height as the lion mask, and the top line of the leg cuts straight across the rail. In the collection there is a mahogany chair of very much the same form and date as the walnut settee and having the lion mask and ring on the knee, but this is set in the usual way under the rail and has no cresting. The settee, though of walnut, belongs to the "lion" period, when mahogany was the favourite wood, and it was exceptional to make such very fine pieces of walnut. It was therefore a piece of good fortune that enabled Mr. Griffiths to obtain last year a second almost identical settee when part of the Compton Verney furniture came under Messrs. Sotheby's hammer. The cresting of the back, of which the rising curve of the small settee marks the dying phase, is finally abandoned, and the splats top the back with a curved

depression. A few more years and the back becomes still squarer, while the solid splat is exchanged for openwork scrolls and strappings.

Although the word chair came to be applied to the light seat with a back, in universal use after the Restoration of 1660, it also retained its original significance as a seat of honour or office. Thus a "Chair of State" appears more than once in the 1699 Hampton Court Palace furnishing accounts. Big and rich chairs were also provided for the chief officials of corporations, guilds, societies and masonic lodges. From a Northumbrian "mason," whose father had been a local grand-master, came a chair, now in Mr. Percival Griffiths's collection, which is of simple cabriole type as regards its legs, but with a back rising to the height of 4 ft. 8 in., and having a much-carved cresting whereof the centre shows a mask backed by sun's rays and flanked with masonic emblems interspersed with flowers. A still more elaborate chair of office is illustrated [PLATE X]. Here the total height is 6 ft. 9 in. A gilt eagle sits on the cresting, which takes the form of a far-stretching roll supported by an acanthus scroll painted green and gold. A little simple inlay and the lion heads that end the arms complete the decoration of this otherwise plain chair, where much of the effect arises from the carefully selected figured walnut veneer that occupies the large expanse pro-

vided by the splat. The seat is covered with undressed hairy cowskin that survived the decline and fall of this lordly piece, which was found thrown aside in a stable.

In contrast with this huge specimen is the little child's chair [PLATE XI, 1], which is only 23 in. high to the top of the back. Yet it is a well-proportioned elbow chair, enriched with acanthus scrolls. The rolls that end the spreading knees are repeated for the feet, which thus have the "French" form of Chippendale's *Director* raised on a square sub-base. Children's chairs became more frequent during the second half of the eighteenth century, and were generally high in the leg, being intended for children sitting at meals with their elders. Such were rightly fitted with a front bar to prevent the little one falling out. But, except to keep it from straying off, there seems no reason for the strapping arrangement shown in this chair, with the seat only 11 in. from the ground. The three holes seen in the left arm enabled a cord to be knotted near the back, be passed through the one arm across the front of the chair, and then be fixed to a knob on the other arm. Tradition has it that it was made for and used by Prince Frederick, George II's elder son. But as he was born in Hanover in 1707, and never came to England till after he had reached manhood and his father had become king in 1727, the attribution can

hardly be correct. The chair is likely to have been made after 1721, the year when Frederick's younger brother, the Duke of Cumberland, was born, and, if it has royal origin, it may have been his.

A popular form of writing-chair in the eighteenth century was that with legs set angle-wise and a low back running round two sides. The one illustrated [PLATE XI, 2] is an ornate specimen having the not very usual feature of a back leg fully cabrioled and enriched to match the other three. The uprights are spiral, crisply carved like all the ornament, of which the cabochon on the knee and the design of the splat are noticeable features. The substance is mahogany, with a rich dark surface that has never been tampered with.

Up to the close of the seventeenth century the "elbow" chair was looked upon with a certain amount of awe and reverence as being reserved for personages of importance. When Cosmo III of Tuscany visited England in 1669, and dined with its chief nobility, he alone was provided with such a seat, although he might insist upon another being brought up for his hostess.[1] We know the type

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[1] "There was prepared (at Wilton) for his highness, at the head of the table, an arm chair, which he insisted upon the young lady's taking; upon which the Earl instantly drew forward another similar one, in which the serene prince

prevalent under Charles II from the set of six lately removed from Glemham, which Sir Dudley North had made for the state apartment of his great house in the City of London. They are gilt; the front legs are C scrolled and heavily carved, as is also the elaborate stretcher that connects them. The back is high, square, stuffed and richly upholstered. It was the English form of the semi-ceremonial chair that prevailed in France before the close of the reign of Louis XIII and continued with little variation throughout the *siècle* of his long-lived son. There the legs were generally of the straight baluster form with flat serpentine stretchers which reached England under William III, although a C scroll, gradually developing into the cabriole, was also used, and chairs of this type are thus described in the 1699 Hampton Court accounts :—[1]

	£	s.	d.
For two Elbow Chair frames of Wallnut Tree, carved fore-parts and cross frames . .	2	10	0

sat, in the highest place; all the rest sitting upon stools."—Magalotti, *Travels of Cosmo the Third*, London, 1821, p. 150. The same thing occurred at Althorp, pp. 248–9.

[1] That year's accounts have been photographed, and a set bound together will be found in the library of the V. and A. Museum.

	£	s.	d.
For 9 yds. $\frac{5}{8}$ of Crimson rich Genoa Velvet to cover them at 36*s.* 8*d.* per yd. . .	17	6	8
For 12 yds. of Inch deep and 8 yds. of Edging Crimson ingraine tufted & twisted Silk fringe w^th^ Crape & Gimpt; w^th^ 69 oz. $\frac{1}{2}$ at 2*s.* 6*d.* for the s^d^ chairs . . .	8	13	9
For covering the s^d^ chairs, finding dyed Lynnen & Cur^d^ hair to Stuff them, w^th^ two Cushions in the seats, & the Elbows filled with downe & fring'd .	5	0	0

The inexpensiveness of the frames, despite their "carved foreparts," compared with the sum lavished on the covering is noticeable. Carved walnut chairs were certainly turned out very cheaply at this time. The same account has an item for six dozens of carved caned chairs at a total cost of £36. A year earlier "2 great Chaire frames of walnut tree finely carved"[1] were provided for S. Paul's for the same sum of fifty shillings as the two for Hampton Court. For Chatsworth in 1702 a Mr. Roberts is paid 15*s.*

[1] [MS. Accounts, 1698 volume, S. Paul's Library.]

a piece for "14 Chair frames Carved and Japan'd black,"[1] whereas a bed which absorbed large quantities of velvets, galloons and fringes cost £470. Although this form of upholstery continued for chairs, tapestry, from Mortlake and other sources, and needlework, largely a home product, were very fashionable. Mrs. Delany's letters show us how Queen Mary's practice of working the coverings of her chairs became a habit with English ladies during the first half of the eighteenth century. No doubt there was also a trade in *petit point* and other needlework, for the considerable surviving quantity of what is a somewhat perishable product implies a very large original output. Mr. Percival Griffiths has been a zealous collector, and has thus been able to replace losses, so that many of his chairs and settees have needlework coverings contemporary with, where not original to, the piece of furniture they are now on. Such we find on several "elbow" chairs similar to those above described, except that, dating from after the advent of the Hanoverians, the back is no longer high, and the legs are of the cabriole form in its later development. The one illustrated [PLATE XII, 1] is interesting in having, like the writing-chair, all legs alike, whereas the usual practice was to make the

[1] [John Wheldon's account book, Chatsworth Library.]

back legs only slightly curved and treated plainly with club feet. In that respect and in the shape of the feet it differs from one illustrated by Mr. Macquoid,[1] and otherwise identical not only in design, but in the carved motifs of legs and arm supports. On one of the set illustrated by Mr. Macquoid was found the label of Giles Grendey of Clerkenwell, who "Makes and Sells all Sorts of Cabinet Goods, Chairs and Glasses," so that Mr. Griffiths's chair probably came from this workshop. Mark the construction of the arm. It was customary at this period for the supports to be fixed on to the side seat rails at a point about one-third of the distance from front to back. They could thus rise straight without inconveniencing the hoop-petticoated sitters of the fair sex. But in Grendey's chairs they rise from the top rail as a continuation of the leg, yet, by means of a rapid rake back, admit of the dress flowing over the sides. Chippendale in his *Director*[2] gives only one example of such construction, and that among his "French" chairs. There the support commences with a scrolled truss that greatly assists the rake back, and that we also find in a very highly finished carved-back chair in Mr. Griffiths's collection [PLATE XII, 2].

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[1] [Macquoid, *History of English Furniture*, Vol. III, fig. 104.]

[2] [Chippendale, *Director*, 1762 ed., plate XIX.]

Acanthus leafage is the principal motif of the carving, appearing alike on the arm supports, on the uprights and splat of the back, and on the knees of the front legs, where it springs from an inverted shell placed as a high cresting.[1] The back is of the square shape which superseded the Queen Anne hoop about 1730, but the splat, despite its perforations, retains much of the older outline. The legs, however, end in the "French" feet that Chippendale had adopted to the exclusion of the ball and claw when he first published his book in 1754. That is early for the form of the arm supports which, even in France, was not much in vogue before the Louis XVI style prevailed.

Stools were for long the only kind of light portable seat, and with the bed and the coffer are apt to appear as the only furniture of chambers in mediæval and even in Tudor inventories.

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[1] This arrangement had a queer look when Mr. Griffiths acquired the chair, for at one period its owner had a fancy for the loose seat and rebate type, and had veneered the rail with mahogany of very different quality and colour from the rest of the chair. By this and from the nail-marks at the base of the arm supports his tampering was quite evident, and Mr. Griffiths has very properly given back to it its ancient appearance by re-upholstering over the rail with old needlework.

They were still universal in the seventeenth century, and John Evelyn, speaking of the generation before his own, says that "nothing was moveable save joynt stools."[1] Although the light chair was displacing them even before the cabriole period began, they still had their uses, and, especially in France, had an immense ceremonial importance. Inferiors mostly stood, while their superiors were seated. But if you were only a little inferior, the privilege of sitting on a *tabouret* might be accorded. It was a privilege eagerly sought after under Louis XIV, when duchesses had the *droit du tabouret*. If it was granted to anyone below that rank there arose almost a crisis at Court, as when, under Louis XV, D'Argenson obtained it for his wife when he was *Garde des Sceaux*.[2] The custom obtained recognition in England, where the word *tabouret* was little used except when referring to French Court customs. It did, however, find occasional colloquial acceptance, and, under date Oct. 11, 1689, Lord Bristol makes this entry in his accounts :—[3]

> Paid then to Noul Tirpane, a
> french varnisher, in full for 10

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[1] [Evelyn, *Misc. Writings*, p. 700, 1825 ed.]
[2] [Duclos, *Œuvres*, Vol. V, p. 330.
[3] [*Diary of the First Earl of Bristol*, p. 137.]

	£	s.	d.
chairs, a couch & two taboretts & all other accounts to this day	12	0	0

Of their ceremonial use in this country we get many examples. When Duke Cosmo dined with English noblemen he himself, as we have seen, sat in an arm-chair, but the rest of the company had stools.[1] The Hampton Court furnishing accounts under William III show that with every Chair of State was provided no other chair, but at least half a dozen high stools, four forms and a footstool. Many of these survive, and two sets of stools, probably dating from 1699, show the cabriole leg in process of evolution. On the occasion of the marriage of Frederick, Prince of Wales, to a princess of Saxe-Gotha in 1736, there arose an acute *tabouret* dispute. Frederick wished his brothers and sisters, who were to dine with him, to sit on stools, while he and his bride had arm-chairs. But the English princesses objected, and remained in the anti-chamber until the stools were replaced by chairs. They were then waited on by their own servants; but after dinner, when these were gone, they "were forced to go without their coffee for fear that, being poured out by a servant of the Princess, they might

[1] [Magalotti, *Travels of Cosmo the Third*, London, 1821, p. 150.]

have met with some disgrace in the manner of giving it."[1]

The types of stools then in vogue are well represented in Mr. Percival Griffiths's collection. They were round or oblong [PLATE XIII, 1 and 2], mostly of walnut, although mahogany was coming in. The seat was sometimes movable, fitting into the frame, which in that case was veneered; sometimes fixed and upholstered over the frame. The form and decoration of the legs followed that of the chairs that they accompanied, the ball and claw being the most favourite kind of foot. Much more rare is the stool with a kidney-shaped seat [PLATE XIV, 1], and it was probably given that form as convenient for sitting at a spinet. For such domestic purposes the stool survived the cabriole period—indeed, what Victorian child did not enjoy gyrating on the piano-stool then in vogue? That was a development of the tripod shape, but four straight legs became usual when Chippendale and his compeers introduced the Chinese style. The one illustrated [PLATE XIV, 2] is in that manner, but a smattering of the "Gothick" taste is added, especially in the rail with its cusped arcading. The form and decorative treatment of the leg is unusual for a stool. From each of its corners

[1] [Hervey, *Memoirs*, Vol. II, p. 117.]

rectangular bars descend taperingly, connected on the outward sides by foliated scrolls, and ending with four little foliated "French" feet.

Settees remained the most fashionable form of plural seating during the whole cabriole period. We have seen [PLATES VIII and IX] two examples in walnut with fiddle back and solid splat, but under George II these were superseded by the square back and the open splat in mahogany. There was very little modification in the leg, the ball and claw remaining in vogue till almost the end of the reign, although Chippendale, keen on novelties, ignored it in his *Director* in 1754. The example given [PLATE XV] dates from very little before that year, judging from the characteristics of the back. The design of the splats and their embodiment with the top are ingenious. Resting on a lyre-shaped lower section, a large C scroll carries a smaller one above it, and the two join to form half the top, which itself merges with the upright, and rolls over in a volute, giving the idea of leather as a material and of Jacobean strapwork as a manner. For the rest, leafage of the acanthus kind is the principal motif, appearing alike on upright and arm, knee and apron. The singularity of the piece lies in the single central upright—an approach to the coming manner when all lines became straight.

Although the settee maintained itself, the sofa had

become a serious rival before the period ended. The bench was generally caned and cushioned under Charles II, and one end was occasionally raised to form a day-bed. Various forms of couches had become fashionable. Thus Lady Wishfort, expecting a lover, says :

> "I'll receive him in my little dressing-room —there's a couch—yes, yes, I'll give the first impression on a couch. I won't lie neither, but loll and lean upon one elbow, with one foot a little dangling off, jogging in a thoughtful way."[1]

The word couch, in its meaning of a day-seat, came early into use, and even in the fifteenth century one might "sit on a cowche that was covered with a cloth of silke,"[2] whereas sofa, even in the seventeenth century, is only mentioned by Eastern travellers to describe a raised divan. But with the eighteenth century, sofa and couch begin to mean the same thing, and in 1702 the Chatsworth accounts show that £7 are paid "For 2 large Saffaws carved."[3] The one

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[1] [Congreve, *The Way of the World*, Act IV, Scene 1, produced in 1700.]

[2] [*New Eng. Dic.*, under Couch.]

[3] [John Weldon's account book, Chatsworth Library.]

illustrated [PLATE XVI] dates from considerably later, and marks the close of the cabriole period. With its French feet, over the volute of which a leaf is delicately spread, it is quite in the manner of Chippendale after he published the *Director*, and its fine form and finish make it probable that he produced it. In the days when that was no special attraction it was bought by a tenant farmer from Sudeley Manor for fifty shillings, and was afterwards found by a dealer in his farmhouse. It is an ample piece, 8 ft. long, and is now covered in old green velvet. The cushion on it has this singularity, that whereas the centre panel with its landscape and figure subject is hand-worked, and likewise three sides of the border, the fourth side, although of the same pattern as the others, is woven. A remnant from a tapestry hanging or cover, it no doubt served as a model to the assiduous needleworker who welded it into her *petit point* production.

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Chapter 4 *Tables and Tripods*

THE mediæval Englishman knew little of any table except that on which his food was set. It is a word that finds scarcely any mention in early inventories, since small ones, which afterwards came to be used in endless variety, were as yet unknown. Thus the table formed no part of the furniture of the chamber, while in the hall, which for many purposes was needed as an open space, removable ones of trestle form were customary, and were generally omitted from the inventories. In the sixteenth century heavy-framed oak tables made their appearance. They held their own for a long while, the provincial joiner producing them on traditional lines up to the very end of the seventeenth century. But their size and weight made them immobile. "The shovelboard and other long tables, both in hall and parlour, were as fixed as the freehold,"[1] wrote Evelyn in 1690 of his father's times. Yet it was still the custom to bring in and remove tables when the company at a meal was large. Duke Cosmo III stayed the night with Richard Neville at

[1] [Evelyn, *Misc. Writings*, 1825 edition, p. 700.]

Billingbear in Berkshire when on his way from Oxford to London in 1669, and after breakfast "the tables were removed."[1] It should be noticed that the plural number is used, and the chronicler of the Duke's travels notes the English custom of serving dinner on tables of oval figure. They will have been not of the trestle, but of the gate-legged type, that had then become frequent, and which, though still mostly of oak, and heavy when of large size, were rendered portable by their flap form. As we know them they are mostly small, and no doubt small ones always predominated. But with the introduction of more convenient types, such as the leaf system, the big flap table would be ousted from the dining-room and be broken up, so that their scarcity now is no argument against their original frequency, and examples at which twelve can sit are still found. Some such, dating from Charles II's time, are of walnut with twisted legs, and the prevalence of the type is shown by Roger North, when he was staying with the Beauforts at Badminton in 1680, noting as peculiar that the duke's own table "was an oblong and not an oval."[2] The use of moderate-sized tables in quantity extended

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[1] [Magalotti, *Travels of Cosmo the Third*, London, 1821, p. 278.]

[2] [Roger North, *Lives of the Norths*, 1825 edition, Vol. I, p. 276.]

to the household, for the same visitor says of the duke that, "In his capital home" he had "nine original tables covered every day."[1] The gate table with flaps was given cabriole legs after the eighteenth century opened. But such a form is not very convincing for large tables, either in appearance or for convenience, and they may never have widely obtained. Certainly survivals are rare compared with cabriole tables of every other form then fashionable. But Mr. Griffiths has secured two excellent specimens in mahogany. The smaller one [PLATE XVII] is round, just under 5 ft. across, and it has four legs—of which two swing out to support the flaps—with lion mask knees and ball and claw feet. The larger table has legs of similar design but six in number. The top is an oval 6 ft. 2 in. by 5 ft. 2 in., so that eight people can sit round it comfortably. The habit of separate moderate-sized tables may well be the reason of the slow adoption of any system of table capable of large expansion. In George III's time the fashion came in of two half-circles capable of being hooked or clipped together to make a circle, or set wide apart and the space between filled by sections on the gate-legged principle of a four-legged centre with a flap on each side. Any number of these could be linked

[1] [Roger North, *Lives of the Norths*, 1825 edition, Vol. I, p. 272.]

together and a numerous company be seated at the one table. But though such tables were not usual until the latter part of the eighteenth century, there are certain survivals of an earlier style showing that the idea was known and occasionally adopted. Sir William Jones, a successful lawyer, built Ramsbury Manor about 1680, and there we find two Charles II walnut half-circles[1] that hook together, and probably had centre portions to make an extension. Of later date and in mahogany, no doubt of the cabriole period but with straight legs for the structural advantage, is the Houghton table with its elaborate system of draw-out legs, flaps and central sections.[2] At Holyrood Palace there is a table with almost straight, but round, legs, terminating in ball-and-claw feet, that forms sections with flaps clipping together and therefore capable of indefinite multiplication and extension.[3] Though excellent pieces of simple craftsmanship, these tables seem very plain when compared with the rest of the get-up of the dining-rooms in which they were placed. But then neither richness nor new fashion mattered much in this article of furniture, as

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[1] [Illustrated by Mr. Macquoid, *Age of Walnut*, Fig. 33.]

[2] [Illustrated by Mr. Macquoid, *Age of Mahogany*, Fig. 42.]

[3] [Illustrated in *Country Life*, Vol. XXX, p. 97.]

in all representations thereof we find the cloth hanging low, so that not merely the top, but also the framing, is unseen. Quite different was the treatment of the side-tables then in fashion, for on them were profusely lavished both fine material and elaborate design in accord with the sumptuous decoration of the rich man's dining-room. For great country magnates they were produced of enormous size with audaciously carved and gilt frames supporting marble tops of rare quality and great thickness. Men of more normal taste and purse had them on a somewhat smaller scale with mahogany frame. Of such Mr. Percival Griffiths has brought together four very representative and well-preserved pieces. The largest [PLATE XVIII], dating from about 1730, carries a top of Brèche Violette marble, 64 in. long by 32 in. wide. The mahogany frame has a wave pattern frieze with carved aprons below it, and the legs have ball-and-claw feet. A very similar, but rather smaller, table has a much bigger central shell to the apron, which is exceptionally bold and massive in its carving. A much less important piece—only 40 in. long—has a plain frieze of choice veneer, and the feet are fully-furred lion paws. These three side-tables are all much of the same date, but the fourth one—likewise about 40 in. long—comes nearer to the close of the cabriole period, having a Chinese fret frieze and French feet.

Away from the dining-room small light tables found ready acceptance during the latter end of the seventeenth century. But there is seldom anything so distinctive about those of that period as to show that any one form was restricted to an exclusive use. Distinctive names, however, begin to occur. In 1690 Evelyn published "*Mundus Muliebris*, or the Ladies' Dressing-Room Unlock'd," wherein a tea-table is one of the many novel and luxurious adjuncts enumerated.[1] In the same year Lord Bristol, furnishing his new house in St. James's Square, pays £10 "to Medina y^e^ Jew for a Tea-table & 2 pair of China cupps for dear wife."[2] Much oriental porcelain was bought for "dear wife" during that and the following year, for there are a score of payments to various dealers, six entries being for cups and saucers and two for teapots. Vases and large pieces were, no doubt, placed on mantel and other shelves as designed by Marot for Hampton Court. But the teapots and cups would be set out on tables, which soon had a raised edge or gallery for the protection of the precious little pieces. In the cabriole period such tables, when small, were fixed or hinged on to a central pillar rising out of a tripod base. The example given [PLATE XIX]

[1] [Evelyn, *Misc. Writings*, 1825 edition, p. 700.]

[2] [*Diary of John Hervey, Earl of Bristol*, 1894, p. 39.]

consists of a round tray, about two feet across and tilting up at will, set on a tripod, of which the unusual detail is the human mask on the knee of the cabriole-shaped legs.

It is very solidly constructed, there being much weight of mahogany in the beautifully carved pillar and footing, but it was intended to be carried about, as is shown by the four hand openings that break the line of the balustered rail. It may therefore be assigned to the service of tea rather than to the display of china, whereas the oblong four-legged table [PLATE XX] is better suited to the latter purpose, although much greater size is attained with little more weight. It is a piece exquisite in design and execution, a cabriole precursor of the Sheraton manner when the craftsman, having attained the highest mastery over both material and construction, was able to give durability and strength combined with a flimsiness of appearance that seems to deny those utilitarian qualities. Much water must have flowed under London Bridge before the devotion to massiveness that marks the early Georgian use of mahogany was replaced by the desire for cutting down the amount of wood to a minimum which resulted in the production of the example illustrated. It will therefore date from about the time of Chippendale's first publication of the *Director*, where Plate LI shows two light oblong railed tables, one straight legged,

but the other cabrioled with French feet and elaborate stretchers of ornate Chinese type with a tree standing at the central point of junction. He describes them as: "Tables for holding each a Set of China, and may be used as Tea-Tables. . . . Those Tables look very well when rightly executed."[1]

The *Director* sheds little light on the character and uses of the varieties of small tables that prevailed in the cabriole period. Besides these "tea or china" tables he only gives a couple of little "breakfast" tables with flaps and four straight legs. There is no tripod table, if we except a little kettle-stand, so that it would seem that this form was already beginning to lose favour. But it is a very distinct feature of early Georgian furnishing, the majority of surviving examples belonging to the latter half of George II's reign. Such is a very fine specimen belonging to Mr. Percival Griffiths [PLATE XXI, 1]. The top, instead of having the usual round form, is oblong, with undulating sides and cut-off corners. It rests firmly on a quintette of short columns and is hinged to turn up. The gallery bends over basketwise with richly modelled pierced scrollwork. The column and tripod have acanthus-leaf ornament, and the feet are of a late and decadent ball-and-claw type. Such tables, and the smaller stands of the same form, could

[1] [*Director*, p. xiv.]

easily be set about for the convenience of ladies taking tea or needing adjuncts and lights for their needlework. But neither they nor chairs were left permanently in the central portions of reception-rooms, which were intended to hold people rather than furniture. In mediæval and Tudor times the latter was so scarce that immobile pieces were not in the way because there were so very few of them. With the multiplication of the numbers and the purposes of the pieces, thought was at once given to a mitigation of their weight and clumsiness. Walnut replaced oak, and the flap, the tilt and the slide became usual table features. When the full surface was not needed such pieces, assuming their compact form, projected little from the walls they lined, and the area of the room was available for a crowd more accustomed to stand than ourselves. The gate-legged table with two vertically hinged flaps was one form. The half-square or round with one flap folding over the fixed part, or opening out to complete the square or circle, was another, and this became almost universally adopted for card-playing. An early form, in oak, occurs in a style that betokens the pre-Restoration period, but as the chief purposes were no doubt card-playing, drinking and such conviviality as were taboo under the Puritan régime, its scarcity until Charles II's time is accounted for. The top was of wood, suitable to all purposes, and

the final specialisation of the card-table only became frequent within the cabriole period. Yet two and a half centuries before that cards were a commodity in sufficient demand in England for the London makers to have so strong an objection to free trade in them as to obtain an Act prohibiting their import. Card-playing was then esteemed a mild form of pastime, and, unlike such "lowde dysports" as "harpyng, lutyng and syngyn," was permissible in a household still mourning for its deceased lord.[1] In Charles II's time its extreme popularity at Court made it usual at Whitehall all seven days of the week, and Evelyn, moralising over the death of the King in 1685, records how on a previous Sunday, "twenty of the great courtiers and other dissolute persons were at Bassett round a large table."[2] This will probably have been a walnut gate-table, for there was not yet a distinct card-table even of small size, although such were then being specialised for chess and back-gammon. They were not folders, but the top, inlaid as a chess-board, slid or lifted off, disclosing a well—the depth of what in an ordinary table would be a shallow drawer—inlaid for backgammon. Samuel Pepys possessed one, the top of which is

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[1] [*Paston Letters*, Vol. III, p. 314, 1875 edition.]
[2] [*Evelyn's Diary*, Feb. 5, 1685.]

illustrated by Mr. Macquoid,[1] and there was a specimen at Hamilton Palace, which was rebuilt towards the close of the seventeenth century by Duke William and Duchess Anne.

With the cabriole came the folding card-table; but at first the plan of covering the inner surface with a woven material glued on was not generally adopted. Not only veneer, but lacquer was apt to form the top, and that this was not used bare for tea and such purposes, nor covered with a cloth for the convenience of taking up the cards, is shown by such surfaces being, at the corners, rounded with a slightly raised moulding to hold the candlesticks, and at the edge, right-handed for each player, an oval depression for money. These are found in mahogany and of the time of George II. But there are Queen Anne examples with woven material. This might be needlework, such as we find at Raby Castle on a walnut table of about 1712. The walnut is used for the banding round the edge and for the candle roundels, but the rest of the surface is needlework. Here there are no money hollows, but they, as well as the candle circles, occur in a table at Penshurst, similarly covered, but dating a score of years later. It is of mahogany, and has lion mask and paw on knee and foot, resembling those of a table of the

[1] [Macquoid, *Age of Walnut*, Fig. 115.]

same date now illustrated [PLATE XXII]. Here, however, the lion holds a ring in his mouth. The whole character of the leg and the nulling of the lower edge of the frame exactly resemble the treatment of the large settee shown on PLATE IX, and as both these choice pieces have also the characteristic of being of walnut although dating from the mahogany age, they are likely to be by the same maker, if not of the same set. The card-table is of unusually large size, 38 in. across when open. The top has been re-covered, but in the old material and on the old lines. The practice of using a close-woven green cloth, similar to that of billiard-tables, and clean cut against the edge of the banding, came later, and is characteristic of the round straight-legged card-tables of George III's time. The most usual earlier covering was green velvet, with a narrow gold galloon, fixed with small-headed gilt nails about an inch apart, masking the junction of wood and stuff. So normal was this before the close of Queen Anne's reign that Pope, in a mock heroic description of a game of ombre, calls the cards

> . . . party coloured troops, a shining train
> Drawn forth to combat on the velvet plain.[1]

The multiplication and development of the card-

[1] [*Rape of the Lock*, Canto III, lines 43-4.]

table was then called for by the rage for gambling with card-playing as its basis. "Rather than forego my cards, I'll forswear my visits, fashions, my walking, friends and relations,"[1] cries Lady Lurewell after a ruinous loss. Nor were they merely a pastime for the frivolous; for, describing the Assemblies fashionable in 1741, Lady Hertford writes to Lady Pomfret, who was in Italy: "Boys and girls sit down as gravely to whist-tables as fellows of colleges used to do formerly. It is actually a ridiculous, though, I think, a mortifying, sight that play should become the business of the nation from the age of fifteen to fourscore. I am to have one of these rackets next Wednesday."[2]

Some card-tables were fitted with a double flap, thus providing both a velvet and a wood top. Such may Pope have had in mind for his game of ombre as, the moment it is over,

> "Sudden the board with cups and spoons is crown'd"[3]

and the company drink coffee. Such tables might

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[1] [Farquhar, *Sir Harry Wildair*, Act II, sc. 2, first performed in 1701.

[2] [*Correspondence of Lady Hertford and Lady Pomfret*, Vol. III, p. 103.]

[3] [*Rape of the Lock*, Canto III, line 105.]

be of round form and dating from Queen Anne's time, as does one—not, however, with double flap—belonging to Mr. Percival Griffiths, with legs of the *pied de biche* type merging into the full cabriole. But the square shape, with serpentine front and projecting corners to accommodate candlesticks, prevailed throughout the cabriole period. Thus the form of both the tables illustrated is the same, although they date some thirty years apart. The later one [PLATE XXIII] may, indeed, not have been made till George III was king, for, though the legs are still cabrioled, they show the same lightness already commented on in the oblong "tea or china" table illustrated on PLATE XX. The whole treatment and ornamentation of the card-table shows the late Louis XV influence that possessed Chippendale when he published the *Director*. It is an exceptionally finished piece, and the fine quality of the wood will be the excuse for the use of walnut so long after mahogany had established itself in popular esteem. It is in untouched condition, and retains its original fiddle varnish surface.

As a change from needlework and cards many ladies dabbled in art. The rather large and heavy drawing-tables, with various fitments and tops to fix at any angle, which began to be made for architects and artists before the close of the cabriole period, were too clumsy and inelegant for the boudoir; but

that the idea could be adapted to the use of the fair is shown by the example given [PLATE XXI, 2]. It is a charming little piece in Chippendale's Chinese style, with an oblong top, 2 ft. long by 18 in. wide. The double top when raised reveals a shallow depression wherein unfinished drawings can lie flat, while there is room in the little spaces afforded at the ends by the bowing-in of the front for pencils and other such material. The rachets, that enable the top to be fixed at any angle, work in a curved case, making, with the corresponding flat slat, an X-shaped filling to the sides with perforated ornament. These, and the stretchers below them and along the back, render the cluster-column legs, fragile as they look, quite capable of sustaining considerable weight. It is in the best manner of the straight "Gothick" leg that began the ousting of the cabriole form and was the forerunner of the tapering square leg of Sheraton times.

The table, such as we have seen it for china display or tea-taking, was not the first or by any means the only use made of the tripod base. It appears to have come to us from France, where that form of foot was affected by such late seventeenth-century designers as Bérain and Marot for the tall stands called *guéridons*. They were part of the sumptuous get-up of the reception-rooms of the great, being of elaborate workmanship and made

of silver or of wood gilt. For placing "*flambeaux ou porcelaines*" is Littré's description of their use, while a design by Bérain shows one with a covered vase on it. But their height, anywhere between 4 and 5 ft., made them as a resting-place for branched candlesticks exactly suitable, together with chandeliers and wall sconces, for lighting saloons where people assembled for conversation and mostly stood. Thus it is as candlestands only that Chippendale describes them, although in his time they were in more general use on a humbler scale. While he gives four examples on one plate, "which, if finely executed, and gilt with burnished gold, will have a very good effect," [1] no gold is even suggested as an alternative for those on three other plates, mahogany having become the customary material. The Marot type, of course, found its way to Hampton Court, the tripod being a dwarf adaptation of the C scroll and stretcher form that we found him using as an alternative to the baluster leg in chairs and tables. This form continued with modifications under Anne, and it is probably not till her successor was on the throne that the cabriole shape, with acanthus knee and club or claw foot, makes its appearance, and that mahogany begins to be the substance. Mr. Percival Griffiths has a

[1] [*Director*, Plate CXLV, 1762 edition.]

pair answering to that description and dating from about 1725, the pillar being of baluster type massively treated out of material 5½ in. in diameter. Later on, with the incoming of the Chinese taste, a more elaborate building up was introduced ; the pillar became only part of the design between tripod and top, or was entirely replaced by a storeyed scheme of scrolls, frets and carved devices. Such is the character of Chippendale's designs, one or two of which quite closely resemble another of Mr. Griffiths's specimens [PLATE XXIV, 1]. The scroll is now replacing the cabriole for the tripod, on which rests a triangular plinth supporting three scrolled uprights of the same moulding as the tripod, but breaking out into cusp foliation when they meet and cluster. They open again to support a second triangle, between which and the hexagon top with Chinese fret rail is a third three-membered storey. The date will be about 1755, and the height of 49 ins. is normal for the period, Chippendale telling us of his examples that "they are from three Feet, six Inches, to Four Feet, six inches in Height."

Early in the cabriole period it had been found convenient to have much lower stands on which candlesticks might be placed to light the seated reader or needleworker, and the same little bit of furniture, if the top had a rail, would hold balls of

wool and other adjuncts without fear of their falling off. Two out of Mr. Griffiths's fairly numerous pieces of this kind are illustrated. The shorter one is 20½ ins. high [PLATE XXV, 1]. Tripod and pillar are richly carved with acanthus, and there is an acanthus valence to the top which is 11 ins. across and hollowed out so as to give a raised edge. The 10 in. candlestick on it is of wood with strings of inlay round its base. The other stand and candlestick [PLATE XXV, 2] are decidedly higher—nearly 4 ft. 6 ins. to the top of the latter, a good height to serve the reading desks and stands then in use. The shade affixed to the candle, now so largely used, had not then been thought of, but little independent screens were occasionally made. The example illustrated [PLATE XXIV, 2] has a total height of 15 ins., the whole, including the panel, being in mahogany. It is modelled on the plan of the then fashionable pole screens. In days when the only source of heat in a draughty room was an open fireplace, it was well to sit as close by it as possible, and the only preventive to being roasted on the one side while the other was chilled was the screen, of which mention is made for the purpose of warding off fire heat as early as the fifteenth century. Two hundred years later a meditative bishop likens the screen that stands between him and the fire to the good friend at Court, "which keepes me from the

heate of the unjust displeasure of the great."[1] I have not met with a survival of that date, but those of the end of the seventeenth century were of the frame type, the panel working up and down between two uprights. At Hampton Court there is one with exactly the same design of footing as the *guéridons* already mentioned and ascribed to Marot. Although this form continued it was not so fashionable under the Georges as the pole type, which was equally efficacious and lighter to move. Of these Mr. Griffiths has got together very excellent and representative examples, of which two are now illustrated. The one [PLATE XXVI, 2] has the interesting singularity of feet carved in the semblance of the front half of a mastiff or bear, perhaps an allusion to the crest or supporters of the family for whom it was made. Shell, acanthus and husk are the motifs of the richly carved tripod and pillar. The panel with rounded top is filled with a needlework presentment of Elijah being fed by the ravens, framed in a floral border. Why, with stag, goat and rabbit at his feet, he needed this attention on the part of the birds is a question which did not occur to the fair needleworker. The other screen [PLATE XXVI, 1]

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[1] [Bishop Hall's *Meditations*, p. 282, 1635 edition.]

has dolphin-head feet to its lighter stand with shallower carving. The oblong needlework panel has a pastoral subject in its central oval, and is delicately edged with a half-circular mahogany baguette, carved with ribbon and flowers out of material only seven-eighths of an inch in diameter.

Other tripod pieces, fashionable during the cabriole period are two and three tiered waiters, and the exiguous washing accommodation which Chippendale calls "Bason Stands."[1] Though very insufficient from a modern standpoint, their design and finish are as high as that of more important pieces, and bring home to us the excellence and originality of our eighteenth-century cabinet-makers. If, in ambitious grandeur, they fell short of the French, to whose invention and artistry they owed much, they, alone among other nations of the age, formed a school of their own and produced every sort of piece in the highest quality adapted to its purpose and to the scale of living of its purchasers. This is not an insular view, but is admitted by French authorities, who, although claiming France as the teacher, admit the English creative power, while ranking Germany as entirely under French tutelage

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[1] [*Director*, Plate LV, 1762 edition.]

and mere copyists so far as worthy output is concerned.[1]

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[1] "L'Angleterre si elle subit, elle aussi, l'influence française, si elle connut le mobilier de l'époque de Louis XIV, le style rocaille et le style antique, sut du moins, de bonne heure, donner une physionomie bien personelle à ces divers emprunts et créer à son tour, à la fin du XVIII[e] siècle, un mobilier qu'on peut ne pas admirer dans toutes ses parties, mais qui lui appartient en propre."—Emile Molinier, *Histoire des arts Appliqués à l'Industrie*, Vol. III, p. 238.

LOOKING-GLASSES played an important part in the furnishing of rooms during the cabriole period, the favourite position assigned to them being between windows, where pictures show poorly, but mirrors are an incident that adds to the feeling of light and extent. Such use was well established under William III, and in the 1699 Hampton Court Palace furnishing accounts we find the item:—[1]

	£	s.	d.
For two Tables and stands suitable to the two panels of glass to be set between the windows . . .	50	0	0

Three years earlier Lord Bristol was getting into his St. James's Square house, and among the expenses is the sum of £70 paid to

> Mr. Gerreit Johnson y^e^ Cabinett-maker in full of his bill for y^e^ black sett of glass table & stands and for y^e^ glasses over y^e^ chimneys & elsewhere in dear wife's apartment.[2]

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[1] [Hampton Court Palace accounts, 1699.]

[2] [*Diary of John Hervey, Earl of Bristol*, 1694, p. 143.]

Here we have the same arrangement of side-table set against the wall between windows, with looking-glass occupying the panel above as at King William's Thames-side palace, and also the mirror which, as still seen in that king's bedchamber, filled the long narrow panel above the chimney arch and below the large panel, which in sumptuous rooms was wont to be surrounded with Grinling Gibbons's carvings. Lord Bristol's glasses were framed in "black"—*i. e.* black lacquer with or without ornament, copied from Chinese and Japanese examples, such as are mentioned by Evelyn as fashionable in ladies' dressing-rooms at this period.[1] For this purpose a frame with wide convex moulding and a large cresting was usual, and the same model was also used for marquetrie. The two types of decoration may be readily compared at Ham House, where, in the "yellow bed-chamber," are placed stands and mirrors of cognate design, in lacquer to the left and in marquetrie to the right of the chimney-piece. Of the latter Mr. Percival Griffiths has a good and typical example [PLATE XXVII]. The background is of walnut-wood. Lilies, carnations, tulips and ranunculuses, all great favourites of the period, are the principal flowers, very exactly rendered, and perched among them is the

[1] ["Large looking-glass richly japann'd."—Evelyn, *Misc. Writings*, 1825 edition, p. 700.]

equally favourite parrot. Wood, variously decorated, was not the only, perhaps not even the most usual, form of framing under William III, when glass itself, cut, moulded, coloured and etched, was freely used for the purpose. The majority of such mirrors were made in England, although very elaborate examples still came from Venice, where the Earl of Manchester went on diplomatic missions under both William and Anne, and will have brought to Kimbolton Castle an exquisite piece of the kind which, in small compass, plays the whole gamut of the Venetian glass-maker's art. It had flourished there from mediæval days, but Draconian laws had not prevented some of the workers being enticed away by envious sovereigns, so that the art, as practised in Venice for table glass as well as silver-backed mirrors, gradually spread to other countries, and reached England under James I. In 1615 he grants a patent for "the making of looking-glass plates" to Sir Robert Mansel, who nine years later petitions for its renewal in consideration of his having brought "into the Kingdome many expert strangers from forraigne parts" to teach the craft to Englishmen.[1] People of not more than moderate means began to acquire them, such as Mrs. William Murray, whose husband obtained Ham House under Charles I, and who, before her

[1] [See *Country Life*, Vol. XXX, p. 712.]

death in Commonwealth times, arranged for the distribution of her effects. Of her looking-glasses she classed three as large, and so her eldest daughter is to have the "greatest" and the two younger daughters those that came next in size.[1] No doubt they would have been thought small before the century ended, just as the largest plates made under William III were pigmies compared to those that Chippendale supplied for Harewood under George III.

The Restoration of 1660 gave a great impulse to looking-glass manufacture as to all branches of the decorative arts. That erratic genius, the second and last Villiers to be Duke of Buckingham, in the intervals of being the leading Minister of State of "Cabal" fame, and of indulging in spendthrift debauch, founded in or soon after 1670 the Lambeth glass works where in 1677 Evelyn found them making "looking-glasses far larger and better than any that come from Venice."[2] The factory, with a Venetian craftsman named Rosetti as chief expert, "was carried on with amazing success in the firm of Dawson Bowles & Co.," until 1780, being located in Vauxhall Square.[3] At first the plates were small,

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[1] [Ham House MSS.]
[2] [*Evelyn's Diary*, ed. Wheatley, Vol. II, p. 322.]
[3] [Allen, *History of Lambeth*, p. 371.]

but ere the seventeenth century closed the improved French methods of casting plates were introduced together with the processes of moulding, etc., necessary for the borders and ornamented frames. Even then the customary sizes, to our notions, were somewhat exiguous and a large mirror had to be made of several plates. Fortunately the usual between-window position made a narrow shape applicable, and, with a greater or less augmentation by borders, a single-plate width was quite sufficient, although two or three were necessary to obtain the requisite height, which might well amount to 8 ft. in one of the lofty saloons of that age. A foot less than this is the height of one in this manner owned by Mr. Griffiths [PLATE XXVIII, 1]. It is composed of two plates, of which the lower one is just under 4 ft. in height and just over 2 ft. in width. It has the bevelled edge then considered so essential that it had to occur whatever the shape or purpose of the piece of glass might be. Thus it runs round the twice-broken curve of the round-topped upper plate, the intricate outline of the cresting or hood and the edge of every part of the border. Hood and border are decorated in gold on a black ground behind the glass, the design of the former, with its central basket of flowers, reminding us of the marquetrie example. Round the border, and aiding the back in keeping the whole thing together, is a narrow gilt-wood frame.

Bevelling and moulding of the same very shallow kind were elaborated into decorative designs, as may be seen in another example belonging to Mr. Percival Griffiths. No doubt this was also a tall specimen, but the lower plate will have got broken or otherwise destroyed, and the top made good as a complete mirror by placing at its base the bottom border and section of framing so that every bit of what survives is original. The border, with three flats and three hollows casting prismatic lights, runs round the plate and then rises up to form a cresting. There is a very slight wooden frame between border and plate and a larger exterior one decorated in gold and black lac. It is a very restrained but very refined piece and came from Finedon Hall in Northamptonshire. Anyone who visits country houses of the period that have retained their old gear knows how numerous these looking-glasses are. Even the sale of the place—at a time when such objects did not fetch prices making them worth bringing up to Christie's—did not always mean their displacement. When, a century or so ago, the Herefordshire Hampton Court passed from the descendants of the Lord Coningsby, who had rebuilt and refurnished it under William III, most of the contents remained and among them a whole series of Vauxhall looking-glasses, with frames in lacquer, marquetrie and gilt as well as several glass-edged, having the owner's coronet etched in the glass

of the cresting. In the same manner, but far more sumptuous, are a pair of mirrors in the State bedchamber at Chatsworth. The total height approaches 12 ft., and though the central plate is very large for the period, yet to make up such dimensions required an elaborate and multiple bordering, with a rich and many-pieced cresting wherein amid other moulded, coloured and etched devices are the ducal arms and supporters. An item in the accounts[1] may very well refer to them :—

		£	s.	d.
1703.	Paid Mr. Gumley for two large looking-glasses . .	200	0	0
	Paid Mr. Chadwick for going to Chatsworth with y^e^ glasses . .	16	2	6

So precious were they that, unlike any other object recorded in the accounts, they needed personally conducting. The Gumleys were evidently important dealers in fine furniture. In March 1693 John Gumley advertises his "Japan cabinets, Indian and English"[2] in the *London Gazette*. In 1702 Lord

[1] [John Weldon's account book, Chatsworth Library.]

[2] [C. Simon, p. 169.]

Bristol pays Peter Gumley £29 for China and Japan ware.[1] Between the windows of the "public dining-room" at Hampton Court Palace are two big looking-glasses of the early Georgian period. The plates are much larger than of yore, yet to make up the desired size, besides the more important gilt-wood framing that had become the decorative feature of mirrors, there are borders of plain bevelled glass in strips, the joints of which are covered with little slips of wood, gilt, about 4 in. long and 1 in. wide, a single cavetto moulding running round a flat in one of which occurs, in very slight relief, the word GUMLEY, proving that well on in the cabriole period one of the family was making and selling finely framed looking-glasses, obtaining the plates, no doubt, from "Dawson Bowles & Co." Another illustration [PLATE XXVIII, 2] shows one of a pair exhibiting the character of such mirrors. They follow the lines of the overmantels of the period, but the latter framed pictures rather than mirrors, as we may see at Ditchley and Houghton among a host of places. At Hamilton Palace there was, until 1919, a suite of rooms with fixed broken-pedimented overmantels framing pictures and also movable gilt-framed broken-pedimented mirrors. Two very big ones, not a pair, occupied their proper place in two-windowed rooms of this large-scaled

[1] [*Lord Bristol's Diary*, p. 146.]

house, whereas Mr. Griffiths's lesser pair will have been designed for a three-windowed room of a smaller-scaled house. They resemble one of those at Hamilton Palace, having the same scrolled corners and the same feather-coifed female mask in the pediments, which, however, in the pair, are not broken, but of small size standing free of the corners where the scroll is continued as an upward-turned leaf, thus emphasising the curved line in a model that largely ignored it. Frames, both of overmantels and of mirrors, long withstood the spirit of the cabriole period that banned the straight line wherever it could be avoided. But in 1740 the spirit triumphed and the curved scroll became the dominant feature in every form and detail of the looking-glass, the way being thus open for a perfect debauch of Chinese motifs, including even entire Chinaland scenes as we find in the books of Thomas Johnson, Ince and Mayhew, and even of Chippendale. In his later time unbroken expanse of plate was an object considered worth striving and paying for, and for wealthy clients he obtained them larger even than the 5 ft. 6 in. in height which is the largest quoted price in the *Plateglass Book* of 1773. This worship of mere size was a misfortune from the decorative point of view. The great plate-glass mirror gives something of the same cold vacuous appearance to the room that plate-glass windows give to the exterior. There are

no more delightful mirrors than those made up so variously but pleasingly from Vauxhall plates at the outset and during the early half of the cabriole period of which those now illustrated are representative.

THE elaborations of civilisation and settled society grew rapidly during the cabriole period, and in no place more than in the dining-room. There had been splendid feasting, with every sort of device for dressing food. But the furniture of the hall or parlour where food was served and the objects for that service had been few until after the Restoration of 1660. Then, if improved methods were still lacking, it was a fault to be noted, and when Pepys sat at the "Merchant Strangers' table" for the Guildhall feast on Lord Mayor's Day, 1662, he complains that: "It was very unpleasing that we had no napkins nor change of trenchers, and drink out of earthen pitchers and wooden dishes."[1] By the end of the century there was not only desire for but realisation of a fuller and more specialised equipment. The trencher was gone, and until porcelain and fine earthenware became fairly plentiful, services of pewter and silver were usual. Partly by money payment and partly by exchanging "old plate of my dear father's,"[2] Lord

[1] [*Pepys's Diary*, ed. Wheatley, Vol. III, p. 321.]
[2] [*Diary of John Hervey, Earl of Bristol*, p. 144.]

Bristol acquired in 1696 dishes and plates weighing about 1,000 oz., and in 1703 "22 new dishes & 3 dozen of plates weighed in all 1668 ounces 5 dwtt."[1] Chafing dishes and Monteith, salvers and stand, chased basket and "large silver cystern" he also obtained during those years. In 1705 he "paid Mr. Chambers for 12 spoons, 12 fforkes & 12 knives," and in 1727 there come to him through the Duke of Shrewsbury's sale "y^e^ case of 12 gilt knives, 12 spoons & 12 forks."[2] Such cases, habitually of wood, were often in pairs, and stood upon the side-tables. In the cabriole period they were of plain mahogany with curved fronts, but later in the century the form became straighter and there was variety and inlaying of wood veneers.

Not only the Lord Mayor's "earthen pitchers," but even the large silver tankards which went round, gave way to the individual drinking vessel of glass or silver. The cabriole period saw the climax of the drink habit in high places. It was not merely the Squire Westerns, but the all-powerful and wealthy minister, Walpole, in his splendid new country palace at Houghton, who indulged in lengthy carousing after dinner. The uproar consequent on such habits causes Lady Lyttelton, when Hagley is being designed in

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[1] [*Diary of John Hervey, Earl of Bristol*, p. 147.]
[2] [*Ibid.*, p. 153.]

1752, to wish for "a small room of separation between the eating room and the Drawing room, to hinder the Ladies from hearing the noise and talk of the Men when they are left to the bottle."[1] The bottle, therefore, largely governed the furnishing of the "eating-room," as it was then habitually called. Before the side-table became the sideboard with drawers and cupboards, a locked receptacle for bottles had to be a separate piece of furniture, and it was convenient for it to be kept under a side-table, but to run on castors so as to be easily brought forward. Such an one belongs to Mr. Percival Griffiths [PLATE XXIX, 1]. It is octagonal in shape, each section of side and top being a sheet of mahogany veneer of exceptionally fine figure, rich but not dark or hot in tone, and in untouched condition. The top segments start from a triple ring of ivory and ebony, and end against a string of chequy inlay dividing them from the plain banded edge. The base, so far as its height permits, fulfils cabriole forms in its curves and outlines, and is carved with foliage motifs. The top lifts to show a lead lining with divisions for nine bottles. The lining is more likely intended for drip from the bottles than for

[1] [Lilian Dickins and Mary Stanton, *An Eighteenth-Century Correspondence*, London, 1910, p. 284.]

icing, although it would admit of this on occasion, so that the piece may also be termed a wine cooler. Its lid and lock, however, fitted it for storage rather than as a receptacle for bottles in process of being emptied. For the latter purpose an open waggon on castors was devised, of which Mr. Griffiths's example [PLATE XXIX, 2] is formed like an oblong stool, but instead of a padded seat there is a fixed tray to hold six bottles or decanters. The corners of each division are high to prevent the possibility of falling out, but ramp down in curves, and the central division rises up to form a handle to direct the course of or even lift the waggon. The somewhat coarse low-relief carving of straggling design with rustic background proclaims its Irish origin, and if any gentry drank more freely than the English at this period it was their Irish brethren.

The service of tea soon became as important as the service of wine. At first it was an expensive luxury. In 1696 Lord Bristol has to pay a couple of sovereigns for half a pound ; but in 1739 he buys it in 2 lb. lots at from 16*s.* to 20*s.* per lb.[1] Locked receptacles were needed for it, and tea caddies of various forms and materials were freely produced. Silver ones, in Chinese style within shagreen silver-

[1] [*Diary of John Hervey, Earl of Bristol,* pp. 144, 156.]

mounted cases, were for the wealthy, while a simple mahogany box to hold a couple of little canisters served for lesser folk. Tea was black and green, so that at least two canisters were needed. As tea became more plentiful, and was bought and used in greater bulk, the caddy was enlarged and set on legs, and the "nabobs" brought the name of teapoy back from India. It was a corruption of a Hindu word for a tripod, and by erroneous association came to mean the receptacle, on tripod or other form of stand, in which tea was kept. When, in the middle of the eighteenth century, the example illustrated [PLATE XXX, 1] was made, the name was not yet introduced, and it was probably merely called a caddy on legs. It is a mahogany box with receding raised top and chamfered angles and enriched with Chinese fret. The chamfer has a stop at the base where it joins the straight leg, down which the ornament is not fretted, but only slightly incised. Lifting the top, we find four metal canisters, square except at one angle which follows the chamfer of the box. Two of the canisters have little round apertures rimmed to take a cap; the others have flat hinged tops, the former being for the teas and the others probably for sugar. The oak-leaved escutcheons are charming, and have never suffered from relacquering any more than the mahogany surface from repolishing. With tea-drinking came in silver kettles with lamps, of

which Lord Bristol bought one in 1698.[1] Urns with taps, and heated by an interior iron, replaced them towards the close of the cabriole period. It was especially for the latter that stands were devised, fitted in front with a little draw-out shelf whereon the teapot could stand just below the tap of the urn. The example shown [PLATE XXX, 2] belongs to the closing years of George II. The legs are only slightly cabrioled, the knee and its wings being a mere swelling out of the ribbing that starts from the French foot. The sway of the curve is continued wave-like in the lines of the top, which, above a beading, has a raised edge rather than a rail, for it only rises a quarter of an inch, but is sufficient to prevent the urn slipping off. Of the same shape is the top of another one, belonging to Mr. Griffiths, except that it lacks the raised edge, and its straight fluted legs proclaim it of the Sheraton period. A width of 11 in. and a height of 22 in.—a little more or less—were the regulation sizes of these elegant little pieces.

The distance between kitchen and eating-room was apt to be enormous in Georgian houses, and, as at Stoke Edith, there was often between the two a

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[1] ["Paid Mr. Chambers his bill in full for a Tea Kettle and lampe."—*Diary of John Hervey, Earl of Bristol*, p. 145.]

resting-place with a hot plate. If there were no steps a wheeled waggon might be used for transport. But the eating-room was frequently placed on the first floor, and hand carriage was necessary. Handled cylinders were, therefore, devised to bring the plates. The choicest of these skeleton pails were mahogany octagons, with one open section for the convenient handling of the plates, and the rest of open fretwork, resembling in simplified form the various devices of chair backs. The one illustrated [PLATE XXX, 3] is in the "Gothick" manner, but Chinese frets and various scroll-pattern devices were also used. They were generally in pairs, and, standing by the fire, kept the plates warm till they were needed. Tiered waggons, or dumb waiters, and corner commodes, such as the one illustrated [PLATE XXX, 4], were among the paraphernalia which went to complete the well-appointed eighteenth-century eating-room.

Chapter 7 *Concluding Remarks*

THE word cabriole, although convenient, is not without it faults as denoting the period of English furniture under review. It was not used contemporarily and is insufficiently comprehensive. It relates to a single member and not to the whole of any piece of furniture. It draws too large a measure of attention to the leg and so away from the all-enfolding principle and spirit of the style, which, at its best, is the apotheosis of the curved line. Rightly treated and understood it shows that line in its self-sufficiency and inclusive completeness—running from base to summit, spreading laterally and co-ordinating under its supremacy every item and corner, exhibiting a continuous, connected suavity, whether in main line or little detail, whether in ocean wave or pool ripple. Although it came at the moment when baroque exuberance was assuming rococo extravagance, it was, while refusing the straight line, a reserved style, and only when sumptuousness or eccentricity was demanded did exuberance confuse its line, and extravagance load its ornament. Certainly it did not depend on such elaborations for success, and often they marred rather than heightened the effect. Simple pieces, devoid

of carved enrichments, such as the Queen Anne chair on PLATE VII, 2, or the George II urn-stand on PLATE XXX, are satisfying, distinguished, aristocratic. Fine material, masterly design, consummate workmanship could produce blue-blooded gentility, unquestioned and self-evident, without the trappings of regal costuming or the splendour of pompous circumstance. Simplicity without commonness, dignity without display, are the characteristics of a great deal of the output of our eighteenth-century cabinet-makers. But with this intelligent capacity for effective reticence there struggled a desire to worship alien gods, a striving after the new, the varied, the unexpected. Guided by the master hand these elements might be subordinated to useful service, but allowed to dominate by the weaker brethren they could only produce anarchy and disorderliness in the realm of decoration.

Efforts to get variety and originality into the somewhat austere and limited framework of Vitrurian rule and Palladian precept had produced the baroque style in Italy as early as the sixteenth century. A rich realism, an importunate vivacity of movement in human and other forms, a sheer cleverness trampling over structural reasonableness had been among its elements. These had grown stronger in the seventeenth century, and had invaded all Europe, although exercising limited power over the earlier exponents of the late Renaissance style in England, where, as

we have seen, a large measure of sobriety prevailed in the sphere of decoration and furniture in the eighteenth century. Yet, at that time, joy in excess, in invention, had called to its aid the distant both in time and space. The archæology and the romance of mediævalism began to have their votaries and the "Gothick" taste crept in. The imports of the East India Companies were making known Oriental wares and customs and the Chinese manner became fashionable. In its "gay and tortuous forms"[1] the votaries of the combination of realism with movement could revel. Indeed, in some of their designs they appear drunk with it. It was towards the close of the cabriole period that cabinet-makers took to publishing books of designs, and as they could engrave even wilder conceptions than they could produce, these books show us not so much their actual output as their unrealised aspirations. In the publications of Edwards and Darley, of Mayhew and Ince, of Lock, of Johnson, and even of Chippendale, we find whole congregations of C scrolls intent on a joy day. In company with Chinamen and dragons, birds and beasts, they wriggle, scamper or sit about rocks and cascades, trees and pagodas, seeking release from encompassing

[1] [Geoffrey Scott, *The Architecture of Humanism*, p. 43.]

swags and wreaths of fruit and flower, leaf and shell. Looking-glasses and china shelves were the chosen fields for these tangled crops, but side-tables came near, while chairs and cabinets were apt to have their pagodas and bells, their rails and frets, their own ample measure of the "tortuous."

The "Gothick" taste, if less riotous in its manifestations, was capable of being more obtrusive, as its forms were more definite and at the same time more antagonistic to the classic style which still ruled in structure and general design. There was not at this period any attempt, scarce, indeed, any dawning desire, to supersede the style which Inigo Jones had brought from Italy by the Gothic or the Egyptian, the Arabic or the Chinese, in severalty or in common. They were trifles for the curious, playthings for a slightly *blasé*, but quite active-minded society, and were used merely as a *sauce piquante* to the solid joint of which it was tiring. Sanderson Miller would erect sham castles and ruined abbeys in his friends' parks, but when they asked him for a serious house, as Lyttleton did at Hagley,[1] he designed it rigidly within the style which we call Georgian. Yet, just as the subsidiary architectural effects in park and garden might be

[1] [Dickins and Stanton, *An Eighteenth-Century Correspondence*, p. 287.]

touched with exotic "whim-wams"—as Gray called them[1]—so could these be called in to deck interior furniture and decorations. "They might, without discordancy, provide the traceries of a bookcase or enrich the mouldings of a Chippendale table."[2] Where the cabinet-maker used the innovations with discretion and taste they gave an agreeable and justifiable fancifulness to his productions.

It is such pieces as these, and not the eccentricities of the age, that Mr. Percival Griffiths has collected to represent this phase of the cabriole style. The bookcase now illustrated [PLATE XXXI, 1] is in strong contrast to the writing cabinet with top [PLATE V]. That has a full architectural character in the classic manner of its age, whereas the bookcase has drawn its decorative motifs from various anti-classic sources. The tracery of its glazed doors is Gothic, the fretting of its friezes is semi-Chinese, its cresting is mainly composed of rococo scrolls, which carry out the cabriole spirit of the curve as does the waved front of the lower doors. The structure is dignified, serious, and within architectural rule, without having architectural feature. The same may be said of the hanging china cabinet [PLATE XXXI, 2], a representative

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[1] [*Letters of Thomas Gray*, ed. Tovey, Vol. I, No. CXIV.]

[2] [*The Architecture of Humanism*, p. 46.]

specimen of the temperate use of the Chinese fret. Such fret used as the enrichment of a solid surface we again find in the little case or cupboard that encloses an Italian cabinet [PLATE XXXII, 1], whereas the frieze of the stand is Gothic and the cabriole legs have the acanthus scroll derived from Italy. That also is the basis of the enrichment of the candle lantern [PLATE XXXII, 2], which is a choice and admirable example of what has been laid down as the basic principle of the cabriole style—the apotheosis of the curved line. The design is so well thought out, the tendency of the curve to run amuck, to stray beyond due decorative bounds, is so well checked and disciplined, that the geometric and structural sense is fully satisfied without recourse to a single straight line except the very inconspicuous one at the base, which itself is modified by gadrooning. The lantern is one of a pair that was in the collection of the Hon. F. S. O'Grady, of Duffield Park, Derby, which came under Christie's hammer in April 1912, when these pieces were catalogued as :—"A pair of Chippendale mahogany Lanterns with glass fronts and sides and looking-glass backs ; the frameworks carved with foliage and fluting and supported beneath by four carved scrolls : 34 in. high : from Coventry House, London."

The sensuous libertinage of form and decoration that was reached by the rococo extremists led to a

reaction. Recourse was again had to the classic past by the reformers, and direct reference to ancient Greece itself was the chief source of inspiration. Hence the style called Louis XVI in France, and which in England is bound up with the names of Robert Adam, as an architect, and of Sheraton, as a furniture designer. The straight line again prevailed, but with an added fineness and reserve. It stood for intellectual elegance tinged with puritanism.

Writing Desk on Stand : Walnut, with Pear Lettering and Pear and Ebony Banding.
Width 23″ at Top ; a Late Example of the Straight William III Leg. *c.* 1710.

Small Writing Bureau with Legs: Walnut, with Pear Banding.

Early Example of Cabriole Leg with Ball-and-Claw Foot. *c.* 1710–15.

Scrutoire, or Writing Bureau : Mahogany.

Opens to a Central Cupboard with Fluted Pilasters Flanked with Sets of Drawers.
Width 27″ at Top. *c.* 1740–50.

Bureau-Dressing-Table : Mahogany, Carved in Low Relief.

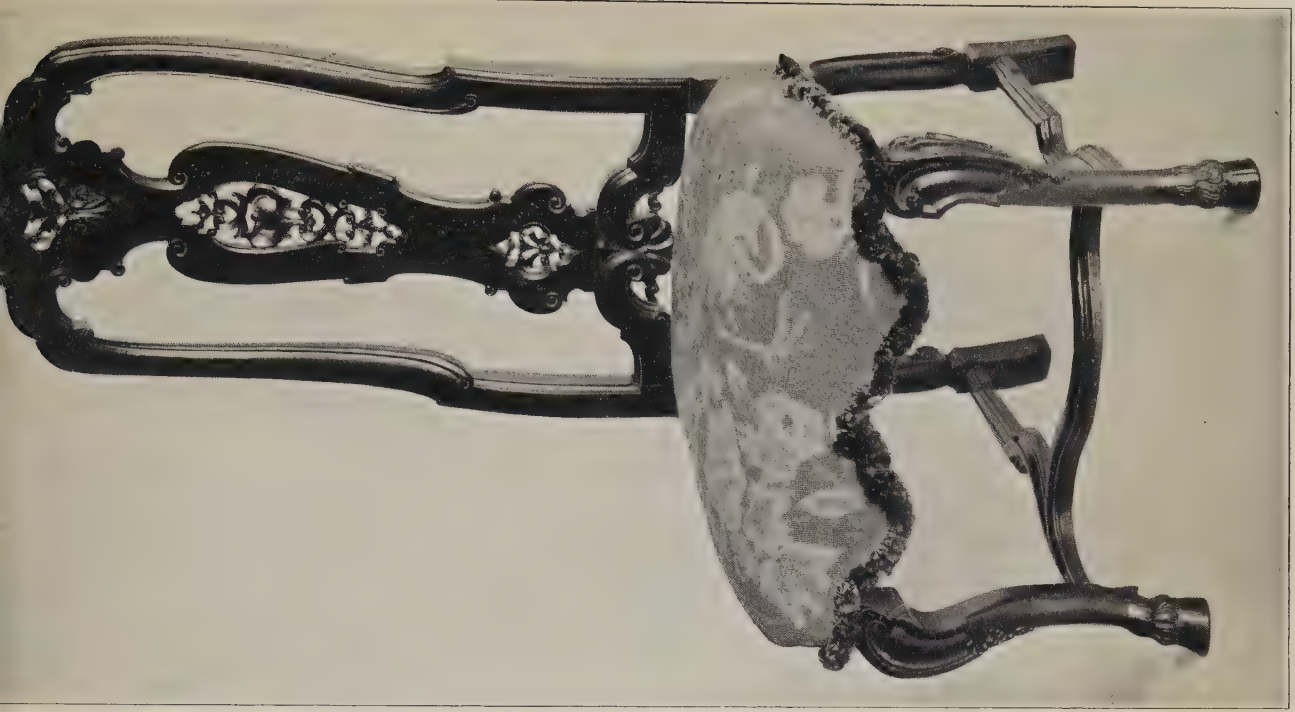
The Writing Flap pushes back to disclose the Dressing Apparatus ; the Central Cupboard pushes back to give Knee Room. Height $32\frac{1}{2}''$, Width $38\frac{1}{2}''$. *c.* 1750.

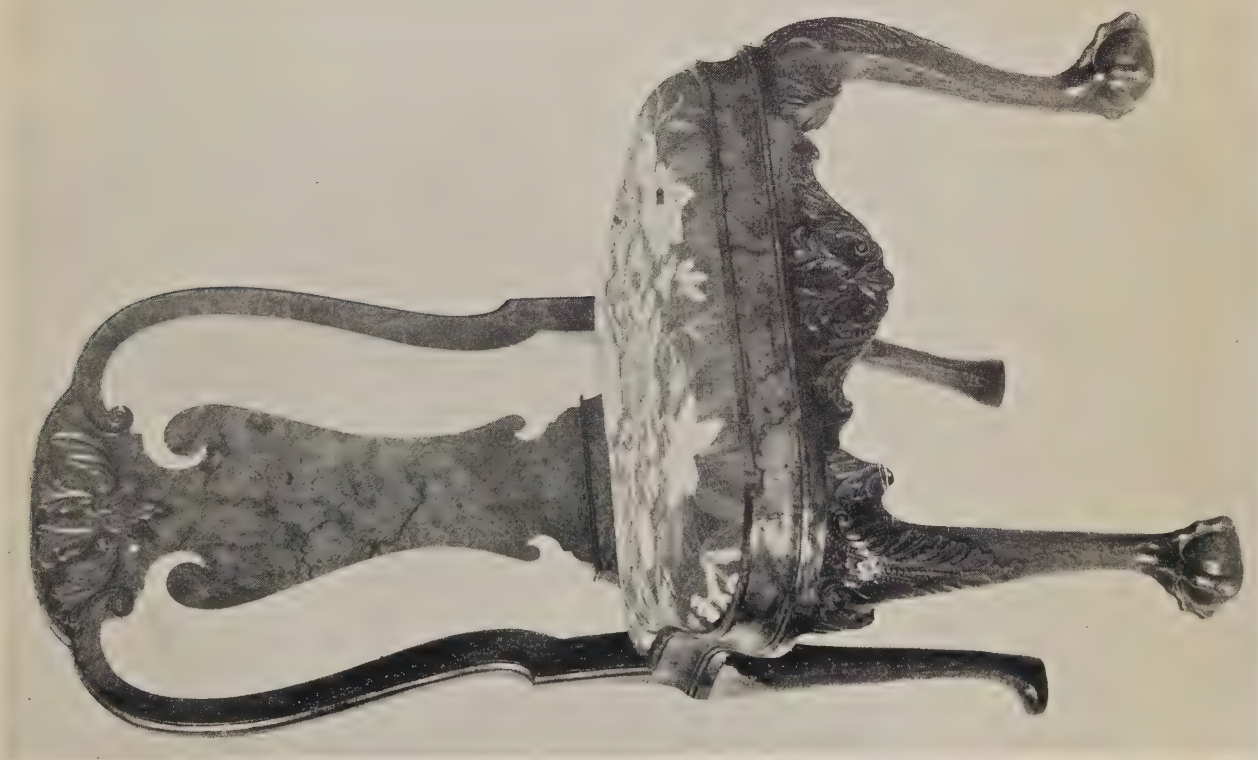
Mahogany Writing Cabinet.

The Upper Part fitted for Ledgers, Books and Documents, the Flaps falling forwards to disclose Drawers, Pigeon-Holes, with Secret Receptacles behind them. Width 3′ 6″. *c.* 1735.

Double Chest of Drawers : Mahogany.

The Frieze and Chamfered Edges carved with Chinese Fret, with Pagoda topped Fretted Plates. 6′ 1½″ High × 3′ 0½″. *c.* 1750.



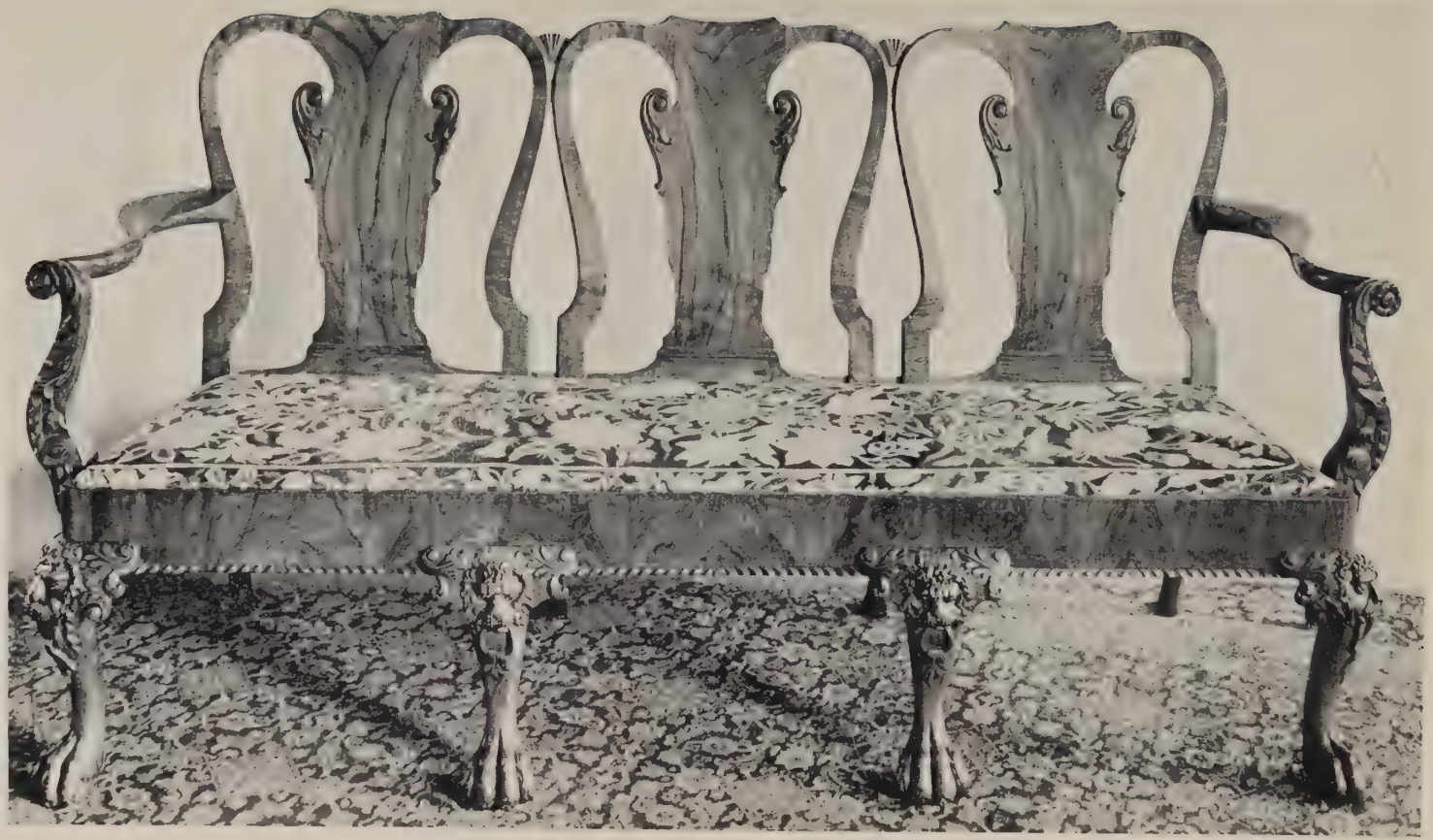


1. Walnut Chair with High Curved Carved Back and Pied-de-Biche Cabriole Legs.
It closely resembles a set in Hampton Court Palace. *c.* 1695.

2. Walnut Chair of Fully Developed Queen Anne Type.
The Back is lowered, the Stretcher abolished. There is no Perforated Ornament and less Carving, a good deal of the Effect depending on finely figured Veneer. *c.* 1714.

Walnut Settee of Small Size, good Form and Workmanship, but with little Ornament.
Typical of the Domestic Furniture of Well-to-do Folk under Queen Anne. Total Length, 3′ 11″. *c.* 1710.

Plate VIII.



Large Walnut Settee, highly Finished and Ornamented.

The Triple Back is unusual, especially in Walnut. Extreme Length, 6′. *c.* 1730.

Walnut Chair of Office, with Gilt Eagle.

Extreme Measurements, 6′ 9″ × 3′ 5″. *c.* 1730.

1

Child's Walnut Arm Chair, covered with Velvet.

Height to Seat, 11″; Total, 23″. *c.* 1725.

2

Mahogany Writing Chair.

Rather Small for its Type. Back Leg Uniform with others. Sides of Seat 15″, Total Height 30½″. *c.* 1745.

1

Walnut Arm Chair with wide Upholstered Seat and Back, Carved Legs, Needlework Contemporary, but not Original, probably Scotch.

Seat 28″ Across, 21″ Deep. *c.* 1740.

2

Mahogany Chair, Arm Supports springing from the Corners of the Frame, Raking Back, High Cresting to Knees, "French" Feet.

Seat 27″ Across, 22″ Deep. *c.* 1750.

1

2

Walnut Stools with Claw-and-Ball Feet, *c.* 1730.

1. With Round Seat Upholstered in Needlework over the Frame 15″ in Diameter. 2. With Oblong Movable Seat Fitting into Rebate of Frame.

1

2

Mahogany Stools.

1. Spinet Stool, Legs with Ribbed Leafage running down from the Knees, and Claw-and-Ball Feet, Kidney-shaped Seat. $13\frac{1}{2}'' \times 9''$. *c.* 1735.
2. Chippendale Chino-Gothic Style, Legs carved "a Jour," Seat-Rail below Upholstering Decorated with Cusped Arcading, Oblong Seat with Slightly Serpentined Sides. $24\frac{1}{2}'' \times 16\frac{1}{2}''$ *c.* 1755.

Small Mahogany Settee of Two Chairback Type, with Single Central Upright.

Seat 43″ Long. *c.* 1750.

Large Mahogany Sofa with Upholstered Back, Sides and Seat, Richly Ornamented Frame, "French" Feet with Upright Leaf.
8′ Long, 3′ 7″ at Centre of Back. *c.* 1760.

Plate XVI.

Round Flap Dining-Table, Lion Mask on Knees and Ball-and-Claw Feet.
Diam. 58″, Height 28″. *c.* 1730.

Side-Table with Brèche Violette Marble Top, Ball-and-Claw Feet, Wave Pattern Frieze, Elaborately Carved Apron.
64″ × 32″, Height 35″. *c.* 1730.

Tea or China Table.

Tripod, with Lion Claw Feet and a Human Mask on the Knees of the Tripod.
Height 27″; Height of Rail 2″, Diameter of Top 23½″. *c.* 1725.

Tea or China Table.

A very strong Table in spite of its extreme Elegance, Delicately Fretted Rail.
Top 30″ × 21″. *c.* 1750.

Plate XX.

1

Galleried Table on Tripod Stand.

The Gallery is exceptional in its Solidarity and Ornateness. *c.* 1745.

2

Cluster-legged Drawing Table.

Its Lightness and Elegance imply that it was made for a Lady Amateur. *c.* 1750.

Walnut Card-Table, with Lion Mask Knee and Lion Paw Feet, *c.* 1720.

Card-Table of Chippendale's "French" Type.

The Choice Nature of the Figured Walnut Veneer is the Excuse for so late a use of this Wood, *c.* 1750.

1

2

Candelabra Stand and Candle Screen.

1. Candelabra Stand, 4′ 1″ High, *c.* 1755.

2. Candle Screen, 15″ High; Panel 9″ × 5½″.

1

2

Mahogany Tripods and Candlesticks, *c.* 1725.

1. Candle Stand, 20½″ High, Top 11″ Across. Candlestick, 10″ High, with Base 5¼″ Across.

2. Candle Stand, 29″ High, Top 13″ Across, edged with Beading. Candlestick, 18″ High, 7½″ Across Base. Acanthus Carving and Brass Top.

1

2

Mahogany Pole Screens.

1. Screen, 5′ 3″ High; Needlework Panel, 26″ × 34″; the Feet shaped as Dolphins. *c.* 1725.

2. Screen, 5′ 2″ High; Needlework Panel, 21″ × 34″. The Feet shaped as Mastiffs. *c.* 1725.

Mirror in Marquetrie Frame.

Original Bevelled Plate, 2′ 0½″ × 1′ 8″. Frame, 5½″ in Width. Size over all, 4′ 3½″ × 2′ 7½″. *c.* 1700.

1

In Two Plates, 3′ 11″ × 2′ 1″ and 1′ 11½″ × 2′ 1″ respectively. Size over all, 6′ 11¼″ × 2′ 7½″. *c.* 1705.

2

Mirrors.

2. In Carved Gilt Wood Frame; the Ground Sanded and, at some time, Blacked over the Gilt, which shows through, giving a Green Tinge. Plate, 3′ 3″ × 1′ 11″. Size over all, 5′ 4⅛″ × 2′ 9¼″. Style approaching that of William Vent, *c.* 1725

1

2

Cellarette and Wine Waggon.

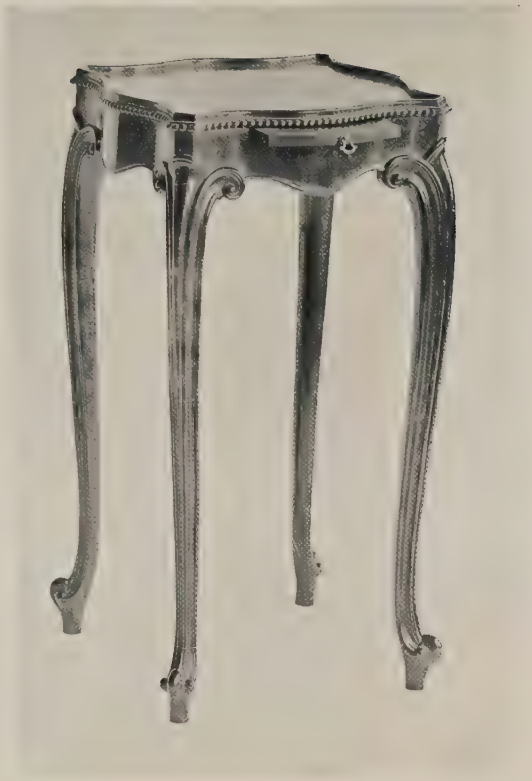
1. Mahogany, Veneer of Finest Quality. Top Banded Edge with Chequy Inlay between it and the Eight Segments of Veneer. Base of Cabriole Type carved in Foliage Motifs. Height 22¾″; Width 23″. *c.* 1740.

2. Mahogany, to hold Six Bottles or Decanters. Ball-and-Claw Legs, Knees and Apron roughly Carved with Foliage, Flower and Shell in the Irish Fashion. Height 20½″; Width 20″. *c.* 1745.

1

Teapoy.

Mahogany, Frieze and Chamfered Edges carved in Chinese Fret, Straight Legs. Top lifts and shows Four Canisters. Height 27″; Width 10½″ *c.* 1750.



2

Urn Stand.

Mahogany, Scrolled Cabriole Legs, French Feet, Beaded Edge and Slight Rail. Height 21¾″; Width 11″. *c.* 1750.

3

Plate Pail.

Mahogany, Octagon with one Open Section to lift Plates, the others pierced with "Gothick" Pattern. Height 12½″; Width 11″. *c.* 1750.

4

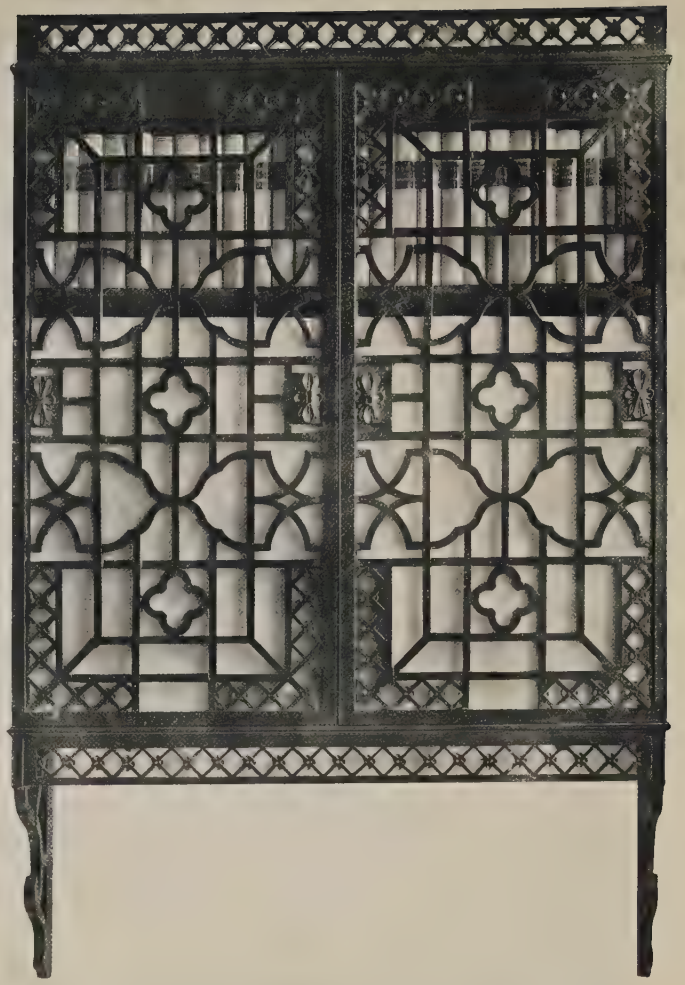
Corner Commode.

Mahogany, Pagoda Top, Straight Legs with Chinese Fret in Angles; Rosettes carved at Corners of Bevelled Panels. Height 26″; Width 11″. *c.* 1745.

1

Mahogany Bookcase, composed of Centre and Wings.

The Tracery and Friezes influenced by Gothic and Chinese Tastes. The Cresting a Rococo Arrangement of C Scrolls and Foliage. Total Height 9′ 2″, including the 6″ of the Cresting. Width of centre 1′ 9″, of each wing 1′ 4½″; total 5′ 6″. *c.* 1755.



2

Hanging China Cabinet, Mahogany.

The Doors and Rails Open Fretwork in the Chinese Manner. The Sides with Chinese Fret carved on the Solid. Total Height 3′; Width 2′. *c.* 1750.

1

Case on Stand containing an Italian Cabinet.

Mahogany, the Case enriched with Chinese Frets, the Rail of the Stand with a Gothic Arcading carved on the Solid. The Legs of Cabriole Form with French Feet and Acanthus Scrolled Knees. The Cabinet of Wood with Gilt Design on Dark Green Background, Framing Marble Panels. The Frieze and Columns also of Marble, the Capitals Wood Gilt. Total Height 3′ 8″; of the Case 1′ 4½″; Width 1′ 5½″. *c.* 1745.

2

Candle Lantern, One of a Pair.

Mahogany. Composed of Curves and C Scrolls with Acanthus Ornament. Height 34″. *c.* 1750.

Plate XXXII.

W7-CWK-164